

Book Review

***The Nile River Basin: Water, Agriculture, Governance and Livelihoods*, by Seleshi Bekele Awulachew, Vladimir Smakhtin, David Molden and Don Peden (editors): Routledge (ed.), 2012, 344 pages, available in Hardcover and kindle formats, ASIN: B00GDF76P8.**

This book presents the results of a seven years research effort focusing on the Integrated Water Resource Management covering the whole Nile catchment. The Nile River Basin book is divided in fifteen chapters, written by forty five authors presenting an in depth analysis of strategical water resource issues in the Nile Basin. These contributions are mainly based upon several research projects supported by the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF) and implemented by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in collaboration with the major national (i.e. universities, research agencies and ministries), international (i.e. NBI, ENTRO...) institutions and NGO'S (i.e. UNESCO, FAO) looking at the Nile Basin's water resources, uses, governance and management.

Most of the fifteen contributions combine different water resource management topics but some classic themes emerge from this book: the Nilotic hydrosystem analysis, the water uses, economy and society vulnerabilities, the governance and the water management perspectives. The first two contributions emphasise with the Nile's water resource problem analysis while the last three contributions explore the expected benefits and opportunities of improving, developing and applying the IWRM concepts at the Nile Basin level. Five contributions on hydrological processes, ground water, sediment flows and wetlands including spatially distributed models (i.e. the SWAT model) give a complete overview on the water resource in the Nile Basin. The reader will find synthetic maps, charts and data updating the knowledge about the Nile hydrosystem from rainfall to runoff including hydropower and water storage topics. Five contributions focus on governance, intervention, socio-economical issues (i.e. poverty, vulnerability, productivity, farming systems...), institution and policy aspects of water management including the upstream-downstream linkages. It addresses the complexity of managing a transboundary catchment at different territorial scales in developing countries from Central Africa up to the Mediterranean region. Five other contributions analyse the agriculture sector, its dependence upon water resource and management for farming, livestock, irrigation, water supply and the resulting water allocations conflicts between water access, water needs and water uses at basin's scale.

The transboundary water governance theme underlies all the chapters of the book but three contributions (i.e. chapters 12, 13 and 15) really succeed in framing the complexity of the Nile basin governance system. These contributions provide a useful retrospective analysis of the transboundary water governance and its evolution over the last decade. The “making of” approach based on the analysis of conflicts and cooperation, environmental flow requirements, hydropolitical scenarios, funding and cooperation processes, external support influence on transboundary water cooperation, really enlightens the water governance evolution among Nile’s basin riparian countries. These contributions also address the question of redundancy and overlap between different international initiatives (e.g. the cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) signed in 2011 and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) signed in 1999) and conclude the governance theme by policy recommendations in the frame of the future Nile cooperation and scenarios.

The scientific material used in this book is of very high quality and benefits from international statistical data gathering, robust numerical tools analysis (i.e. remote sensing, GIS, SWAT) and a high level of expertise of socio-economic issues in the Nile Basin. The reader or the scientist will find in this book an up-to-date synthesis including an in-depth hydrological and water demand modeling, a scenario and trade-offs analysis, all providing a comprehensive coverage on the Nile’s case. The number and quality of figures, maps, tables and bibliographical references are contributing to the high academic level of this book. Moreover, the Nile River Basin book was written by a multidisciplinary team of scientists and engineers authors with international scientific expertise grounded by real field knowledge, making this book a must-have for anyone interested in the IWRM of an transboundary catchment in developing countries or the Nile River Basin geography.

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